United Nations S/PV.5508

Security Council

Sixty-first year

Provisional

5508th meeting

Tuesday, 8 August 2006, 3.30 p.m.

New York

President:	Nana Effah-Apenteng	(Ghana)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Mayoral
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Congo	Mr. Ikouebe
	Denmark	Ms. Løj
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Greece	Mr. Vassilakis
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Peru	Mr. Pereyra Plasencia
	Qatar	Sheikh Hamad bin Jassem bin Jabr Al-Thani
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Slovakia	Mr. Burian
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Emyr Jones Parry
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Manongi
	United States of America	Mr. Bolton

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

06-45832 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.40 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I invite His Highness Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates, to participate in this meeting, pursuant to rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I invite His Excellency Mr. Amre Moussa, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, to participate in this meeting, pursuant to rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to His Highness Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan and His Excellency Mr. Amre Moussa.

I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Israel and Lebanon, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I welcome the presence of the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, at this meeting.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Sheikh Hamad bin Jassem bin Jabr Al-Thani, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar.

Sheikh Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to express my thanks and appreciation to you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting. I also thank the Secretary-General and his staff for the efforts being made to contain the current crisis in the Middle East.

We are participating in this important Security Council meeting in the hope that the Council will carefully consider the delicate situation in Lebanon and in the Middle East, whose extraordinary circumstances and events are affecting peace, security and stability in the region. The current crisis in sisterly Lebanon comes at the expense of its people, its land, its infrastructure and its political stability.

When the United Nations was established, it was meant to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, as provided by the Charter of the Organization, which entrusted the Security Council with the responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. That is a major responsibility that must be taken seriously, because it directly affects the lives and the livelihoods of innocent people. Therefore, it is most disheartening that the Security Council has stood idly by, unable to stop the bloodbath that has become the bitter daily lot of the defenceless Lebanese people.

The draft resolution now before the Council requires careful consideration that takes into account the Arab position as expressed at the extraordinary meeting of the Council of Ministers of the League of Arab States held yesterday in Beirut. At that meeting, the seven-point plan of the Prime Minister of Lebanon, which has been endorsed by all Lebanese political parties, was unequivocally adopted. The Council's consideration of this issue should also take into account the socio-political structure of Lebanese society as well as the interests, unity, stability and territorial integrity of Lebanon. Our presence at today's meeting is an explicit expression of the collective Arab position, which fully reflects Lebanon's position on the draft resolution.

Accordingly, we draw the Security Council's attention to the repercussions of adopting a non-enforceable resolution. That would further complicate the situation on the ground and have grave ramifications for Lebanon, for other Arab countries and for all the countries of the region. How often has the Council adopted resolutions to establish benchmarks

and lay the groundwork for peace in the region — resolutions that were not accepted by some parties and therefore were never enforced or implemented? An example can be found in the resolutions relevant to the primary question — the Palestinian question — and the repercussions of the conflict that has engulfed the region, leading to instability and to this spiralling cycle of violence.

It is a mistake to believe that pursuing a policy of violence against Lebanon will put an end to this situation and provide security for Israel or help to restore the stability we all desire. To the contrary, what is now occurring will sow the seeds of hatred and extremism in the area and provide a pretext for those who believe that the international community is taking sides and lacks fairness with regard to this dispute.

We believe that establishing a just, lasting and comprehensive peace is the only way to achieve stability in the region. We have expressed that strategic position again and again, and we remain committed to it. However, peace has requirements and commitments that all parties in the region must respect: everyone in the region must live within safe and recognized borders, and the Palestinian people must obtain their legitimate rights, including the right to establish their own independent State, living side by side in peace with the State of Israel.

We continue to have faith in the Security Council's ability to shoulder its Charter responsibilities to ensure the achievement of security, peace and stability in the region. The stakes are high; so are the hopes that the Council will adopt a decisive, substantive and clear resolution that serves not only Lebanon and the Arab community, but also a peace built on justice and equity and that takes into account the interests of all parties concerned without any discrimination. That can be achieved through an immediate comprehensive ceasefire, a withdrawal of Israeli forces to behind the Blue Line, a strengthening of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon through an increase in the Force's strength and material support and an expansion of its mandate to enable it to play the role entrusted to it, and support for the Lebanese Government's stated decision to extend its authority throughout its territory by deploying the Lebanese army.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Tarek Mitri, Minister of Culture and Special Envoy of the Lebanese Council of Ministers.

Mr. Mitri (Lebanon): We have come to this body, to the international community, asking for an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire. Twenty-seven days ago, we asked for an immediate ceasefire. More than 900 lives ago, we asked for an immediate ceasefire. More than 3,000 injured civilians ago, we asked for an immediate ceasefire. We asked for a ceasefire when the 1 million Lebanese who are now sleeping on the floors of schools, public buildings and welcoming homes were still sleeping in their own homes — homes that, for many, no longer exist.

Eight days ago, in the shadow of the massacre of Qana, we pleaded again for an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire. We are meeting today in the shadow of yet more massacres — "mistakes", as Israel calls crimes against civilians. Twenty-eight farm workers were killed in Qaa, and yesterday, 38 civilians, at last count, were killed in the bombing in Al Shiyah, a residential area in Beirut.

I shall now quote from a report released by Human Rights Watch:

> "The pattern of attacks during the Israeli offensive in Lebanon suggests that the failures cannot be explained or dismissed as mere accidents; the extent of the pattern and the seriousness of the consequences indicate the commission of war crimes." (*Human Rights Watch, vol. 18 no. 3 E, August 2006, summary*)

Today, we received the draft resolution with acknowledgement of the efforts expended by many members of the Council to come to an agreement. We acknowledge their determination to end the violence, and we appreciate the concern expressed by the international community for the future of Lebanon, supporting our democratic Government and its attempt to provide a framework for peace and stability. Regrettably, the draft resolution not only falls short of meeting many of our legitimate requests but also may not bring about the results that the international community hopes it will achieve.

We requested an immediate ceasefire; what has taken so much time is still not an immediate ceasefire. It is neither immediate nor a ceasefire: the draft resolution calls for a "cessation of hostilities", laying

out some principles. Some of those principles Lebanon affirms and embraces. But greater clarity is needed on many other issues; that clarity is crucial for Lebanon.

The draft resolution calls for a cessation of attacks by Hizbollah and for Israel to stop all "offensive actions". Members of the Council all know that Israel has never conceded that its actions in Lebanon have been anything but "defensive". All the wars launched by Israel against our country have been claimed to be "self-defensive". In this respect, the draft resolution leaves Lebanon vulnerable to the whims of Israel. How can this be viable? How can a resolution provide for a cessation of hostilities and then in fact carry the great risk of continued violence and destruction?

Thus, for a cessation of hostilities to be viable, Israel has to start withdrawing immediately from Lebanese territory. This should not be postponed. The Lebanese armed forces, with the assistance of United Nations forces, should be the only ones to deploy throughout Lebanon, including in the area between the Blue Line and the Litani river. Our Government reaffirms its immediate readiness to deploy an Lebanese army force of 15,000 troops in the south as the Israeli army withdraws behind the Blue Line, and it expresses as well its readiness to request the assistance of additional forces to enhance the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, all on the basis of the seven-point plan that was unanimously approved by the Lebanese Council of Ministers yesterday.

Moreover, a serious move forward in dealing with the issue of Sheba'a farms is necessary for a durable and long-term political settlement. To be frank, we have had indications that the international community is ready to move on this issue, but the draft text before us does not sufficiently reflect such indications and such readiness.

Our people need an explicit and firm assurance from the international community that the integrity of our borders — ground, sea and air — finally will be respected by Israel. We do not need to list Israel's track record in refusing to comply with many Security Council resolutions. Suffice it to refer to Israel's 22-year delay in complying with resolution 425 (1978). Since its "withdrawal" in the year 2000, Israel has not respected Lebanese sovereignty. Frequently it has ignored the Blue Line, in both Lebanese territory and airspace, with impunity.

For its part, the Lebanese Government reaffirms its long-standing and consistent respect for international resolutions, and also reaffirms its determination to preserve its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. We have laid before the Council what we think are the necessary prerequisites that will empower our Government to preserve our national unity as a people, to defend our right to live in peace and to rebuild our devastated country. To achieve those priority goals we need the sustained support and solidarity of the Security Council.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Israel.

Mr. Gillerman (Israel): For the past four weeks, the peoples of Israel and Lebanon have been caught up in a brutal and tragic conflict. It has caused unbearable loss and suffering on both sides. It is time to bring this conflict to an end.

But speeches and resolutions do not themselves end conflicts. Neither do good intentions. Conflicts are ended by actions, not by words. They are ended when those who sparked the conflict and those who seek to continue to threaten the region are confronted and overcome. The critical test that the Security Council faces is not whether it can adopt a resolution. The question is whether the Council and the international community can adopt a course of action, a blueprint for change, which will end the threat that Hizbollah and its sponsors pose to the peoples of Israel and Lebanon and to the region as a whole.

That is the test, and both the forces of terror and the forces of moderation in the Middle East are looking to the Council to see if it is up to that challenge.

Neither the people of Israel nor the people of Lebanon have any wish to be in this conflict. There is no quarrel between us. Six years ago, Israel withdrew its forces from every inch of Lebanese territory, as the Council has emphatically confirmed.

It could not be clearer: the issue in this crisis is not territory, but terror. During the past six years, Hizbollah terrorists, funded, trained, armed and directed by Iran and Syria, have dug their roots deep into Lebanese soil and have spread their poisonous branches throughout its towns and villages. The evil fruit of this growth has been over 13,000 deadly missiles murderously directed at the people of Israel.

And over the past four weeks, Hizbollah has viciously implemented its threats, launching those lethal missiles directly and indiscriminately at the towns of Haifa and Afula, Nahariya and Hadera, Kiryat Shemona and Kfar Giladi, Carmiel, Metulla and Akko, and the holy cities of Nazareth and Tiberias, targeting men, women and children, Jewish, Muslim and Christian alike.

No country in the whole world would, or should, allow a terrorist organization to publicly threaten its destruction and to develop a vast infrastructure of terrorism unimpeded on its borders. No State represented in this Organization would, or should, sit passively while over 3,500 missiles are fired at its town and villages deliberately targeting homes and hospitals, at schools and kindergartens. No Government would, or should, do less to protect its people than the Government of Israel has done in the face of this Hizbollah campaign of terror, and no people would, or should, be satisfied unless their leaders did the same.

Israel, like any State, has done and will continue to do whatever is necessary to protect the lives of its citizens. It has the right and the duty to act in self-defence, and it will spare no effort to bring its abducted soldiers home.

In fulfilling this responsibility to protect its citizens, Israel's task is doubly complicated. It must defend itself against an enemy that not only deliberately targets civilians but that also hides among them, concealing its weapons and rocket launchers at the heart of civilian communities, as well as in mosques and United Nations compounds. For Hizbollah, civilians are not just a target, but also a shield.

In this impossible situation, in which Hizbollah openly flouts the fundamental humanitarian principle of distinguishing combatants from civilians, Israel has made strenuous efforts to defend itself in accordance with the principles of international law, to direct its attacks against military targets and to avoid disproportionate damage to the civilians used as cover by the terrorists. At the same time, even as the terrorists' missiles fly, Israel has worked to ensure that the humanitarian needs of the population can be met, enabling convoys carrying aid and supplies to reach those who need them and facilitating evacuation of foreign citizens and United Nations personnel.

Could there be a difference more striking or profound than that between Israel and the terrorists it is confronting, between those who equip their residential buildings with bomb shelters and those who fill them with missiles, between those who drop leaflets entreating civilians to leave the terrorist strongholds and those who hide rocket launchers beneath unknowing apartment dwellers, or between those who mourn the death of every civilian, Lebanese or Israeli, as a tragedy and a failure and those who see in it a victory and a cause for celebration?

I believe that the people of Lebanon, through all the pain and anguish of these past few weeks, have seen through the callous disregard of Hizbollah, which claims to fight their cause but places a weapon next to a sleeping child. I believe that one courageous Lebanese youngster was speaking for many when he wrote in his Internet blog, "It is not only Israeli soldiers that Hizbollah has taken hostage. It is us, the people of Lebanon". I believe it has never been clearer that, for all its talk of bravery, Hizbollah has demonstrated the lowest form of cowardice, cowering behind the weakest members of society. Indeed, in many cases, Hizbollah's lethal missiles are fired on timers, so that the terrorists can flee the launching site while leaving helpless families behind to shield the military target. And this the terrorists have learned well from their sponsors: from Iran and Syria. Just as Hizbollah chooses to hide behind others and fight from within their homes, so do Iran and Syria demonstrate cowardice and disdain, fighting their wars through proxies, on Lebanese soil. Perhaps more than anything else it is this disdain for the lives of those they claim to be fighting for, this chain of cowardice, which unites Iran and Syria, Hizbollah and Hamas: the quartet of terror.

These past four weeks of violence have taken a painful toll on the Lebanese and Israeli peoples. But they have also created a new opportunity. After six years of inaction that allowed Hizbollah, with the backing of Syria and Iran, to develop a lethal capacity to destabilize the region, a significant part of that capability has been destroyed. Hizbollah bases have been dismantled, missile launchers and stockpiles of weapons have been removed, and the area of south Lebanon has been substantially cleared of the infrastructure of terrorism. As a result, for the first time in six years, there is a possibility that Lebanon and the international community can begin anew and repair the omissions that led to the current crisis.

But this requires determined and forceful action. It requires a strong, robust and effective international force which will ensure the dismantling and disarming of all terrorist groups and the implementation of resolution 1559 (2004) in all its parts. It also requires enforceable and effective measures that will prevent the continued supply and rearmament of weapons and ammunition from the merchants of terror in Damascus and Tehran, which continue on a daily basis, even as we speak. And it requires the Government of Lebanon to show the will and the courage to retake control of its destiny, to confront the terrorists that have wreaked havoc on its society and to meet the basic obligations placed by international law and by the Council on Lebanon to end the use of its territory as a base to threaten the territory of others. These are fundamental and unconditional obligations expected of any Government, and they are not dependent on its assent.

These are practical measures needed to lead us out of this crisis. Israel is ready to cease hostilities and to withdraw its forces if these effective measures come in its place, so that the terrorist threat on its citizens is finally brought to an end. We want a ceasefire, but a ceasefire that sows the seeds of future peace, not of future conflict.

The test of any resolution or proposal must be whether it will effectively bring about those practical changes on the ground. Let us not forget that a resolution is not an end, but a means to achieving our end: a new and sustainable situation in which the peoples of Lebanon and Israel are freed from the threat of terror and have the chance to live a normal life in peace and prosperity.

I am sure that my Arab colleagues who have spoken today, and who I believe are sincere in their desire for peace and stability for the region, do not want a resolution to create a vacuum that Hizbollah will fill. I am sure that they do not want a return to the status quo ante, in which the terrorists and their sponsors can hold a region and the prospects for peace hostage. And I am sure they do not want a resolution that demonstrates impotence rather than action.

The terrorists are watching. If the Security Council adopts the path of half-measures, concessions and mere declarations, they will be emboldened, and we will find ourselves back at this table a week, a month or a year from now, facing a tragedy of similar, or even greater, proportions. But if the Council adopts a path of action and takes the measures necessary to ensure that its own resolutions are implemented, terrorists and their masters in our region and throughout the world will know that they have come face to face with the will and resolve of a united international community. And, as a result, the forces of peace and moderation in the Middle East will have won a crucial battle for the future of our tortured region.

We ask only that the international community stand by those forces of peace; that it understand that by fighting against terrorism, we fight for peace; and that it have the courage, the wisdom and the conviction to ensure that the end of this conflict creates a new pattern of behaviour — a reality in which the moderates prevail and the extremists meet with the justice and isolation they so clearly deserve.

I turn once again to my Lebanese colleague and, through him, to the Lebanese people. There is no dispute between us. The horrendous violence and suffering of these past few weeks have been fuelled not by any interest or agenda of either of our States. They have been fuelled only by the cynical and genocidal intent of extremist regimes that wish to destroy any possible prospect that we might turn their culture of hate into a culture of hope. We must change their culture of hate into a culture of hope — a culture in which Lebanese and Israeli children can go to school rather than cower in bomb shelters. We must do so today in order to bequeath to them the tomorrow they deserve.

I believe that this culture of hope can and will prevail. Children are not born wanting to be shahids or murderers of the innocent. Ultimately, the innate human desire to create a better life for ourselves and those around us will prove stronger than the hatreds that have manipulated and fuelled this conflict.

For the people of Lebanon, this is a critical moment of decision — whether to cast their lot with those who will work to promote peace and prosperity or with those committed to undermining any chance of such progress. The choice, quite simply, is between those who build and those who destroy. For the sake of our peoples, for the sake of our children, I beg them to choose the builders.

The flags of our two States, which show the cedars of Lebanon and the Star of David, remind us that the common history of our peoples is one of building together. The biblical Book of Kings recounts

that King Hiram of Tyre, in Lebanon, sent cedar trees and expert craftsmen to King Solomon, son of David, to join him in building the holy temple in the city of peace, Jerusalem. Our people have a long and glorious history of building together. Let us find the courage to rise from the ashes of war and the ruins of conflict, and to build together once again.

The President: I shall now give the floor to Sheikh Hamad bin Jassem bin Jabr Al-Thani, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar, to make a further statement.

Sheikh Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I apologize for seeking the floor again.

I am happy to hear the representative of Israel express the wish for a ceasefire and speak so positively of the Lebanese people. Whether or not we agree with respect to the recent aggression, what has happened is the result of the violations committed by Israel against Lebanon before Hizbollah existed. Those include the repeated occupation and devastation of Lebanon.

Frankly, I am not defending any party, and what I know about Hizbollah I have learned through the media. We all know that this tragedy could have been averted by the granting of legitimate rights through the resolutions of the Security Council and agreements reached in Madrid and Oslo. Many factors have accumulated in favour of giving terrorists the opportunity to pursue acts that threaten international peace and security, precisely because we have been unable to ensure the implementation of Security Council resolutions, particularly on the issue of Palestine.

Many efforts have been made and many international peace conferences convened. Who is impeding peace today? Who is delaying the granting of rights today? All such factors are enflaming the region and encouraging the establishment of a society rife with unbridled terrorism, regardless of the legitimacy or lack thereof of its cause. We do want a cessation of hostilities and a ceasefire, but we want it to be just and established by a resolution of this Council, and not imposed exclusively from an Israeli perspective.

If we adopt resolutions without taking the reality of Lebanon fully into account, we will face a civil war there. Instead of helping Lebanon, as the representative of Israel has claimed to wish to do, we will destroy it. Many wars have raged there. My Lebanese colleague knows full well what he wants and what can be implemented on the ground. Let us do something to maintain peace and security in the region. Let us focus on who has implemented and who has failed to implement the Council's resolutions. Who is strictly subject to the resolutions of international legitimacy and who is not? Who has helped to create the phenomena of terrorism and jihad, cited by the representative of Israel, in the Arab world? The jihadists have seen weak Governments fail to obtain peace with Israel.

I speak on the basis of my faith in peace and our sincere wish to coexist in peace with Israel in the Arab region, but not in the way Israel wants. It must be on the basis of the restoration of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and adherence to the resolutions of international legitimacy.

The President: I shall now give the floor to Mr. Tarek Mitri, Minister of Culture and Special Envoy of the Lebanese Council of Ministers, to make a further statement.

Mr. Mitri (Lebanon): It pains me to hear the reference to Tyre cited from the Bible. Tyre is now a city of desolation. Tyre has been bombarded and pounded almost uninterruptedly for the past 10 days or so. King Hiram of Tyre sent cedar trees to build, and the Israelis are destroying Tyre today. It pains me to hear the reference to Tyre at this point in time.

The "campaign against terror", as the Israelis like to call their all-out war against Lebanon, has been perceived, felt and lived by the Lebanese as horror — nothing but horror. In Israel's wanting to destroy the infrastructure of terrorism, as we heard, it is the infrastructure of Lebanon that is destroyed.

All in this body know that, in international law, there are two principles regarding civilians: the principle of distinction and the principle of proportionality. I am afraid that those two principles have been systematically violated since 12 July. Be that as it may, I will end with these few words.

I am here — we are all here — to find a way out. Yesterday's proposal by our Government is a viable option and should be looked at as a viable option. It allows for a true and effective cessation of hostilities. It will lead to a durable ceasefire. It opens the way forward: it opens the way forward towards a more

durable solution. I hope that the opportunity that this option offers is not missed.

The President: I now wish to give the floor to the representative of Israel to make a further statement.

Mr. Gillerman (Israel): I would like to reply to Mr. Mitri's, I believe, genuinely expressed pain about Tyre. We share that pain; we share that pain very much. We grieve for the destruction of Tyre. But I listened very, very carefully to the statement made by the Lebanese representative, and there is one word which was curiously missing from that statement. That word is "Hizbollah". We did not hear that word once, as if Tyre were just a quiet peaceful town and not a hub of terrorism from which rockets and missiles have been fired at Haifa and other Israeli cities — as if there were no Hizbollah, as if this all came out of nowhere. I think that there should be at least some mention of the true root cause of this horrible conflict, which is the fact that Hizbollah has taken Lebanon, including Tyre, hostage.

It is actually the Ambassador of Lebanon, who is sitting behind Mr. Mitri, who said on United States television that in Lebanon you cannot distinguish between the Lebanese and Hizbollah. In his words, Hizbollah is everywhere in Lebanon. Hizbollah has infiltrated every fibre of Lebanon and, in his words, become part of Lebanese society. To address this painful problem, including the pain of Tyre, without mentioning Hizbollah borders on — I will not use the word that I wanted to use.

The President: There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.